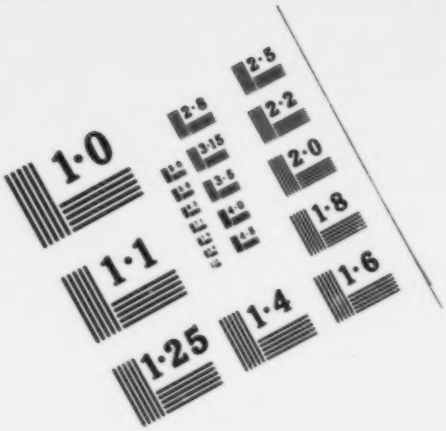

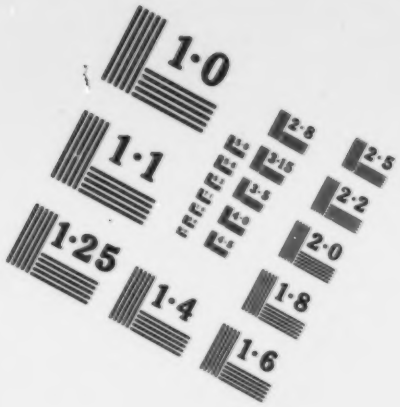

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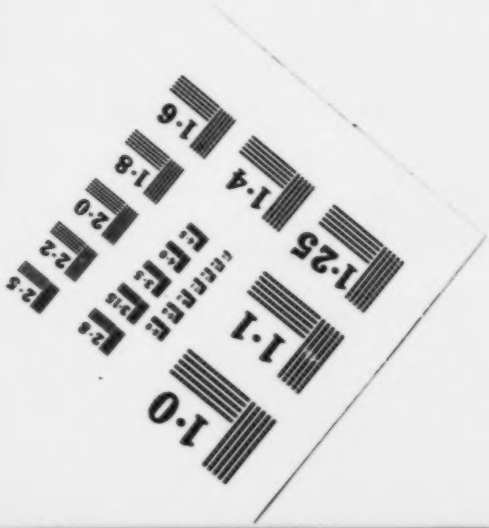

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General Assembly

FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

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FIRST COMMITTEE
Seventeenth meeting
held on
Friday, 25 October 1991
at 10 a.m.
New York

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 17th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MROZIEWICZ (Poland)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 47 TO 65 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT ITEMS

The CHAIRMAN: The first speaker on the list for this morning's meeting is the Observer of Switzerland, on whom I now call.

Mr. CHENAUX-REPOND (Switzerland) (interpretation from French): The past year has witnessed unexpected but very welcome progress in the field of disarmament.

The agreement reached in the strategic arms limitation talks (START) and the unilateral cuts recently announced by the United States and the Soviet Union should help to facilitate extending the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 1995. With the further accessions and intentions to accede announced by France and China, that important Treaty has now become nearly universal. We are convinced that the few States that have not yet become parties to it will take these developments into account.

However, that positive development is somewhat tarnished by other, less-happy events that have recalled the difficulties involved in the proliferation of atomic, biological and chemical weapons. We are thinking in particular of the alarming discoveries of flagrant violations by Iraq of the non-proliferation Treaty and the safeguards agreement concluded with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

The IAEA safeguards system, as applied by the Agency until now only to installations duly declared as coming under the safeguards agreement, has been called into question. It is up to the Agency and to its member States to draw the necessary conclusions and strengthen the existing system.

(Mr. Chenaux-Repond, Switzerland)

The inspections carried out by the United Nations Special Commission in Iraq, to which Switzerland is contributing experts, have provided valuable information in this connection.

The primary responsibility for monitoring exports of military matériel and products used in the manufacture of weapons of mass destruction is incumbent upon States.

On 24 September of this year Mr. Roland Dumas, Minister of Foreign Affairs of France, stated in the Assembly that his country intended henceforth to respect full-scope safeguards with regard to all exports connected with nuclear power.

On the following day Mr. Douglas Hurd, the British Secretary of Foreign Affairs, announced from the same rostrum that his Government also intended to implement a policy of full-scope safeguards.

My country took note of both statements with great satisfaction. In its turn, on 23 October, it decided to implement the same policy of full-scope monitoring of nuclear exports to non-nuclear-weapon countries. Such exports would henceforth be authorized if all the nuclear installations and activities of the recipient countries were subject to the peaceful-use safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

(Mr. Chenaux-Repond, Switzerland)

But such a policy of full-scope safeguards cannot make its full contribution to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons unless it is adopted by all supplier countries. Thus, we call on the few supplier countries that have not yet done so to take the necessary decisions in this regard.

In the field of export controls, the Swiss Government is preparing new regulations that will enable us more effectively to control the export of dual-use technology and equipment that can be used for peaceful purposes as well as for the manufacture of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. With those regulations, Switzerland will be able fully to apply a control regime to missile technology.

The Gulf war has shown - if that were necessary - the consequences of the over-armament of a State. The report by the Group of Governmental Experts on the Ways and Means of Promoting Transparency in International Transfers of Conventional Arms is very much to the point and contains conclusions and recommendations of great interest. We welcome the fact that a Swiss expert consultant contributed to the preparation of that study. Among the recommendations of the group of experts, the establishment of a universal, non-discriminatory United Nations register of transfers of conventional arms would, we think, be particularly useful for achieving greater transparency in this area.

In line with the interest we have always shown in the codification and development of humanitarian law applicable to armed conflicts, Switzerland has been constantly concerned about weapons that can cause excessive suffering. In that connection, we are taking part in efforts by various States in the field of anti-personnel laser weapons intended to blind the adversary, and in

(Mr. Chenaux-Repond, Switzerland)

the field of so-called new weapons in general. The Swiss delegation is pleased to note that this item will be on the agenda of the forthcoming General Conference of the International Committee of the Red Cross to be held in Budapest at the end of November.

In that same context of weapons which may be deemed to be excessively injurious, my delegation wants also to recall that it recently informed States parties to the Geneva Conventions that they are entitled to make use of the technical facilities of the weapons-testing centre of the Federal Military Department at Thoune to test their small-calibre weapons or munitions.

My country actively supports the work of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. An agreement on the complete prohibition of chemical weapons seems for the first time to be within reach. We particularly welcome the recent initiative by the President of the United States on the destruction of chemical-weapons stockpiles. The possibility of opening all capable chemical-industry facilities to international inspections would fill a major gap in the verification system. We hope it will be possible quickly to resolve outstanding problems, inter alia in the area of verification.

Another important task of the Conference on Disarmament is the conclusion of an agreement on the complete prohibition of nuclear tests. Because of its composition, the Conference on Disarmament seems to us to be at present the sole multilateral body qualified to negotiate on that subject. We therefore hope a negotiating mandate will be given its Ad Hoc Committee on nuclear tests. In the meantime, the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts to Consider International Cooperative Measures to Detect and Identify Seismic Events, in which Switzerland plays an active role, should continue its work.

(Mr. Chenaux-Repond, Switzerland)

In conclusion, I want to draw attention to the fact that last March Switzerland, which participates actively in the work of the Conference on Disarmament as an observer and which is the host country of that body, put forward its candidacy for full membership of the Conference. We hope that candidacy will be accepted.

The CHAIRMAN: I call next on the Secretary of the Section for Relations with States of the Holy See, His Excellency Archbishop Jean-Louis Tauran.

Archbishop TAURAN (Holy See) (interpretation from French): First, Sir, I want to express my pleasure at your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee; I congratulate you warmly. The fact that you are of the Polish nation calls to mind the crucial role your country has of late been playing in Europe. Poland and the Poles were among the first to undertake the pilgrimage to freedom that is enabling a whole continent gradually to become a place where the rights of peoples are not merely enshrined in constitutional or international texts but are becoming concrete reality.

In reflecting on this epic of freedom, I think too of the lesson we can learn from it: it is possible to change the face of a society, making it more human, more democratic, more worthy of mankind, without striking a single blow. Armed conflict and war can never be the way to solve social or political problems. That naturally brings us to the subject before this Committee, whose agenda is largely devoted to disarmament.

Since last year's session, the world has witnessed devastating conflicts. I refer particularly to the Gulf war and the war now tearing Yugoslavia apart.

(Archbishop Tauran, Holy See)

The first reaction of each of us, I think, is sadness: sadness at having to admit that human beings still do not know how to benefit from the lessons of history. After the tragedies of the Second World War, colonial wars, and crises in the Middle and Far East, one would think that national leaders would have finally understood what Pope John-Paul II said on 12 January this year: "Peace obtained by arms only lays the ground for new violence".

We are all aware of the unfortunate human and political problems that persist in the Middle East, problems the coming Madrid conference on peace in the Middle East should help to resolve through dialogue and negotiation.

We continue - with anguish - to witness the new front that has opened in Europe: the bleeding wound that is the civil war now lacerating Yugoslavia.

The process promoted by the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), initiated in 1972, gained the consensus of 38 countries on the 1975 Final Act, which included a set of principles that have inspired the way in which relations have developed among European nations. Those principles are expressed in the commitment no longer to use war to settle disputes. Today, as I speak, we are seeing that great achievement in international conduct flouted by European peoples whom geography and history have made neighbours.

(Archbishop Tauran, Holy See)

Disarmament, therefore, is by no means a purely academic question; it is a necessity on which depends the survival of our world. The experience of these last months is sufficient to demonstrate the futility and the cruelty of war in itself. The Holy See, for its part, has spoken and continues to speak the same language to all, and that is that war, with the destructive means provided by modern technology, will never resolve with any finality the problems between peoples. The fact that now military action is not limited to the belligerent alone but soon becomes regional and even world wide; the destructive capacity of existing armaments capable of wiping out the infrastructures of a whole country and of depriving the civilian populations of the resources essential to their survival; and the ecological consequences, are all elements which need to be considered before embarking on what might well be called an irresponsible exploit. In any case it is absolutely necessary to exhaust all the peaceful means which international law places at the disposal of all to find solutions worthy of mankind before unleashing any kind of war. And it is necessary always to judge in all conscience whether the evils to be created are proportional to the objectives for which a decision to fight was made in the first place.

Thus for years the community of nations has placed its trust in nuclear deterrence. The use of this particularly destructive weapon has been so dreaded that no one has dared to use it. But in this case we speak of a desperate solution; the absence of war is not peace.

Today the new international climate tends to promote dialogue and mutual confidence and thus to persist in the policy of nuclear deterrence becomes more and more contestable. The recent disarmament treaties, moreover, rightly

(Archbishop Tauran, Holy See)

strive to reduce nuclear deterrence to the lowest level and to develop confidence-building.

I should like to repeat here what was said by Pope John Paul II who, in his most recent encyclical Centesimus Annus affirmed;

> "No, never again war, which destroys the lives of innocent people, teaches how to kill, throws into upheaval even the lives of those who do the killing and leaves behind a trail of resentment and hatred, thus making it all the more difficult to find a just solution of the very problems which provoked the war. Just as the time has finally come when in individual States a system of private vendetta and reprisal has given way to the rule of law, so too a similar step forward is now urgently needed in the international community."

That is why the Holy See considers the efforts for disarmament to be a priority for the leaders of nations. And so the signing of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) between the United States and the Soviet Union in July last is a cause for rejoicing. The Holy See has also taken note of the recent decision of the two major nuclear Powers to eliminate short-range nuclear weapons. These are gestures for which humanity can be grateful. We hope that soon agreement will be reached on a convention for the universal, global and verifiable prohibition of chemical weapons.

The reduction of conventional forces in Europe, agreed in the Treaty signed in Paris on 19 November 1990, and the adoption of confidence- and security-building measures which bind the participating States of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) are equally significant steps which it would be desirable to extend to other regions of the world. The Europeans have, in effect, made innovations in this matter

(Archbishop Tauran, Holy See)

thanks to three techniques: first, effective measures of verification and restraint; secondly, a progressive reduction of armaments; and, thirdly, policies of cooperation and confidence. These procedures should serve as an example because essentially the modern conception of security consists in prevention rather than cure.

Since at the end of this year of 1991 we are aware of the risks inherent in over-armament we should underline certain major dangers which should be remedied without delay, and I shall refer to two of them. First, while we speak about disarmament, nevertheless the modernization of nuclear and other arms continues, and all this is frequently at the expense of the well-being of peoples. The second danger is that the arms trade is flourishing and we have heard that $1.5 million are spent every minute in the world for the purchase of military matériel.

The Holy See has always hoped that favourable conditions would be created for the conversion of ever greater parts of military budgets to finance developmental and environmental policies. Concrete initiatives, moreover, could be taken in this field. For example, it has been suggested that a register be set up to record the transfer of armaments or the sale of arms.

Basically, the point here is to ascertain whether the resolution of international conflicts will continue to be done by the force of arms.

The United Nations, for 46 years, has striven with perseverance - as stated in Article 1 of its Charter:

> "to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace".

(Archbishop Tauran, Holy See)

Homage must be paid to this noble aim of the United Nations and, even more, the United Nations must be given the means to enable it to be ever more capable of helping to find peaceful solutions to conflicts and to counteract the military ambitions that still threaten the international community.

The Catholic Church wishes to repeat here, with all the strength of its conviction and of its centuries-old experience in the service of peace, that war is not inevitable. Justice, solidarity, respect for one's neighbour, respect for the opinions of others and the free and legitimate choices of peoples are the foundations on which human coexistence rests. That is why disarmament is not possible while human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law are not respected and promoted by all Governments.

(Archbishop Tauran, Holy See)

That is why disarmament efforts would be illusory if they were not accompanied by the actual elimination of instances of injustice and by respect for the just aspirations of peoples to freedom, to self-determination, to a homeland and to life with dignity. It is to these great tasks - which, in my opinion, are the honour of the human person and of societies - that everyone's energies should be resolutely dedicated, instead of being mobilized for future wars.

The challenge of peace confronts the entire international community, and the historic circumstances of today should enable us to meet that challenge.

May the discussions conducted in this Committee and the careful attention of experts provide reflections and guidelines which will enable societies and their leaders to place their trust less and less in armaments and to devote themselves more and more to the advent of an authentic community of nations.

Mr. KRAVCHANKA (Belarus) (interpretation from Russian): Allow me at the outset, Sir, to congratulate you sincerely on your election to your high and responsible post. I take particular pleasure in doing so, because you are the representative of a neighbouring country with which we are developing close and friendly relations and with which we have been on the very best of terms over the centuries. I wish you and all the officers of the First Committee success in the performance of the Committee's tasks.

I believe I can safely say that among the States Members of the United Nations at the present time there has come about a consensus with regard to the appraisal of the present phase of world development, which is characterized by a shift away from confrontation towards cooperation and by a desire on the part of States to set up a new international order based on the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Such an appraisal is

(Mr. Kravchanka, Belarus)

confirmed by the major practical steps taken in the spheres of international security and disarmament, the settlement of regional conflicts and the strengthening of the role of the United Nations in world affairs. These steps are being taken at the multilateral and bilateral levels or at the initiative of individual States.

Many participants in our discussions in this Committee have emphasized the significance of these measures, among them the Soviet-American Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) and the recent initiatives of the Presidents of the Soviet Union and the United States in the sphere of nuclear disarmament and the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE). In these circumstances, the notion that the arms race is being supplanted to a certain extent by an accelerating process of disarmament appears to be valid.

There is no doubt that we must continue to give high priority to the implementation of further decisive measures to bring about nuclear disarmament, a process in which all nuclear Powers would be involved. We support this appeal and at the same time believe that each State can and should make its contribution to the process of nuclear disarmament.

Belarus seeks to make the fullest possible contribution to the solution of disarmament issues. Our Parliament has set itself the task of converting the Republic of Belarus into a nuclear-free zone and a neutral State.

On the way towards achieving that goal, which was proclaimed in Belarus's Declaration of State Sovereignty last year, we have put forward an initiative for the establishment of a nuclear-free zone consisting of Belarus, the three Baltic States, Ukraine, and other States wishing to be included in that zone.

(Mr. Kravchanka, Belarus)

The events of the past year have proved the rightness of our judgement in taking our initiative. The time has now come to take the next step forward: to conduct substantive consultations with all interested parties on concrete measures for the establishment of such a zone and also on the procedures, methods and steps for casting it in a proper form under international law. We are prepared to be involved in that process.

Many delegates in the Committee have voiced concern as to what will be done with the nuclear weapons situated in the territory of individual Republics of the former Soviet Union. In this connection, I wish to state that the Republic of Belarus does not seek to possess nuclear weapons and is considering the possibility of acceding to the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) and of liquidating the nuclear weapons in its national territory. We would not want a relentless fate to draw us some day into an unforeseen situation, into the all-consuming blaze of a thermonuclear war, an Armageddon. The fate of nuclear capability in the territory of Belarus - its utilization, deployment and redeployment and of control over it - can and should be resolved only with the direct participation of the Republic of Belarus and not behind its back. This also applies to any other components of military capability in our territory. We see a direct connection between such concepts as sovereignty and the nuclear-weapon factor. The reality of establishing the former concept depends on the pace and specific forms of the elimination of the latter.

We fully understand, of course, the complexity and delicacy of the military and political problems involved here and the fact that the solution to these problems depends on the general European situation and the positions taken by other countries.

(Mr. Kravchanka, Belarus)

That is why Belarus sees a need for appropriate channels to carry out the necessary international work to that end. On the basis of those considerations in particular, at the beginning of this year Belarus requested the Conference on Disarmament to admit it to membership in that important body. I hope that our request will be granted in due course.

Belarus is passing through a new phase in the establishment and development of its independence and its statehood. On 25 August of this year its Supreme Soviet gave constitutional status to the Declaration on State Sovereignty and adopted a decree on the Republic's political and economic independence. On 19 September it decided to rename the State "Republic of Belarus". At the beginning of October of this year the Supreme Soviet adopted a declaration on the principles of foreign policy, reaffirming Belarus's commitment to the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and other fundamental instruments of international law.

The Republic of Belarus looks forward to support from the world community for its initiatives and expresses its readiness to establish mutually advantageous cooperation in all spheres with all interested States.

During this debate delegates have put forward many interesting and constructive ideas and proposals designed to ensure international security and disarmament. As we see it, the political realities of the post-confrontation period have created favourable conditions for positive consideration of those ideas with a view to stimulating multilateral dialogue on disarmament questions. It is essential to make the fullest possible use of this situation by concentrating on those aspects of disarmament in which multilateral efforts could bring significant practical results.

(Mr. Kravchanka, Belarus)

The delegation of Belarus shares the view of those delegations that have advocated a complete ban on nuclear-weapon testing and the conclusion of an appropriate treaty. Lack of a comprehensive nuclear-test ban is undoubtedly one of the most acutely felt omissions in the international community's movement towards disarmament, because the implementation of such a ban would make it possible to halt the qualitative upgrading of nuclear arms and to eliminate what might well be the most important incentive for nuclear competition. The cessation and prohibition of nuclear-weapon tests would also make a substantive contribution to strengthening the non-proliferation regime. Converting the 1963 Moscow Treaty banning nuclear-weapon tests in three environments into a comprehensive instrument is one of the most important ways to achieve the long-standing goal of a complete ban on nuclear-weapon tests. The Republic of Belarus advocates the further study of such a course, together with continued efforts in other areas. We welcome the Soviet Union's decision to declare a one-year moratorium on nuclear-weapon tests, and at the same time we call upon the other nuclear Powers to follow that example, as that would certainly facilitate progress towards a complete ban on nuclear-weapon tests. We feel that the Conference on Disarmament should also focus more actively on this matter.

In recent years the problem of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and other types of extremely dangerous weapons and of the technology for their production has become particularly serious. The growing technological and economic capabilities of States, combined with continuing or new focal points of regional conflict, and especially the aggressive efforts of certain States, such as were made in the Persian Gulf, call for careful and urgent attention

(Mr. Kravchanka, Belarus)

by the United Nations. A number of States have already made specific proposals. In particular, we regard as very timely the proposal by many countries to start preparatory work in 1993 for the 1995 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which could give the Treaty the legal status of an agreement of unlimited duration.

A ban on chemical weapons is also within the sphere of responsibility of the United Nations. Some progress has been made this year in the Conference on Disarmament in drawing up a convention on the prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons. It is to be hoped that by mid-1992 full agreement can be reached on its text. As a sponsor of the draft resolution on the question, Belarus feels it is appropriate for the General Assembly to invite the Conference on Disarmament to complete its work on this question as soon as possible. The current relevance of banning chemical weapons is becoming increasingly clear. Belarus, in whose territory chemical weapons were used during the First World War in the Lake Naroch' region, with the loss of thousands of lives, is keenly interested in ensuring that such things never happen again anywhere.

There is cause for satisfaction about the work of the Third Review Conference of the Parties to the Convention banning bacteriological weapons, particularly with regard to solving the questions of control and greater openness and trust, which will doubtless promote successful work on strengthening the regime for the banning of those deadly weapons.

Reducing armed forces and conventional armaments is also an important issue. The Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe is an unprecedented step in that regard. That Treaty, signed last year by 22 European States, together

(Mr. Kravchanka, Belarus)

with new approaches to cooperation within the framework of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, has given a completely new quality to relations between States and to the maintenance of security on the continent. Belarus, in whose territory there is an extremely high concentration of armed forces, is interested in the prompt implementation of the provisions of the Treaty and further progress in that area.

(Mr. Kravchanka, Belarus)

We shall work for the early ratification of the Treaty.

In today's circumstances, we do not see any serious obstacles to the recognition of the new realities of the world by the participants in the Helsinki process. We see no reason why they should not proceed on the basis of participation by Belarus on an equal footing in their important efforts, which will determine the future of the continent in so many respects. A suitable opportunity to do so could be the meeting of the members of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe at the foreign-minister level, scheduled for January 1992.

At past sessions of the General Assembly, Belarus delegations strongly emphasized the need for a shift in a number of places, including the competent organs of the United Nations, towards the practical harmonization of criteria and parameters relating to strictly defensive military doctrines and structures. For that reason we welcome the multilateral dialogue on those problems that has commenced within the framework of the United Nations and the preparation of a study of defensive concepts by a United Nations group of experts.

We again emphasize the idea, voiced by our delegation a year ago, that the subject of armaments and ecology is an extremely timely one, and we hope that the United Nations will study the possibility of agreement on steps to be taken in that field.

In its statement, the Belarus delegation has not sought to raise all the fundamental questions relating to disarmament. In our view, what is most needed now is to focus on the elaboration of practical steps in the disarmament field, to endeavour to involve all States in that process and to enhance the ways and means used by the United Nations in that extremely important field of activity.

Mr. GDAIA (Saudi Arabia) (interpretation from Arabic): It pleases my delegation to express our sincere congratulations to you upon your election as Chairman of the First Committee of the General Assembly. We also wish to express our congratulations to the other members of the Bureau. We are confident that with your wisdom and experience the meetings of this Committee will bear fruitful results.

This Committee has undoubtedly contributed and will continue to contribute indispensable, substantive efforts to promote international peace and security, particularly at this juncture. This international forum has an effective function for crystallizing common positions aimed at reaching reasoned, rational results that would have a positive effect on the creation of a peaceful international environment that should be conducive to the achievement of the noble objectives for which this international Organization was created.

The world is entering upon a new stage in which the international order experiences important transformations, unequalled since the Second World War, in its foundations and directions. There is movement towards the creation of a new internationl order founded on the principles of the United Nations and international legality.

While the world was welcoming the dawn of this new era and was looking forward to the establishment of the element of equilibrium as the general norm of contemporary international relations with all the prospects that that entailed; while the world was looking forward to overcoming the obstacles and the tragedies of the past and was feeling optimistic at the threshold of this new era which would highlight the resolve of all the peoples of the world to solve their differences by peaceful means, renounce the use of force; and seek

(Mr. Gdaia, Saudia Arabia)

to achieve national and international goals through dialogue, understanding and constructive work, the Iraqi regime surprised the entire world by occupying the State of Kuwait. In doing this, it contravened all international instruments and diplomatic norms, threatened international and regional peace and security and caused a deep fissure in the heart of the Arab Nation, which was moving from disunion to unity, from divergence to convergence and towards a comprehensive emotional and intellectual rapprochement.

Now that almighty God has ensured the success of the efforts of the international community to stop aggression and abort the plots of treachery and evil, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, like the rest of the international community, reaffirms the need for a full implementation by Iraq of all Security Council resolutions in order to avoid a repetition of this international catastrophe.

The positive developments in relations between the United States of America and the Soviet Union and their movement towards the reduction of weapons of mass destructions are developments that tend to make one feel more secure. The world is happy to see those two States moving towards peace and cooperation instead of war and confrontation and dealing in the balance of interests rather than the balance of terror.

In this context, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia wishes to salute the far-reaching initiative recently declared by President George Bush and the response of President Mikhail Gorbachev of the Soviet Union concerning the reduction of nuclear weapons. These historic changes impel the entire world to reach for new horizons where resources may be channelled to international development.

(Mr. Gdaia, Saudia Arabia)

Proceeding from Saudi Arabia's policy which stems from its love for peace, we have acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We have abided by its provisions and have always urged the international community to renounce chemical, bacteriological and all other weapons of mass destruction.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has repeatedly declared its absolute support for the initiatives aimed at creating a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the entire region of the Middle East. We have always affirmed that all States in the region, particularly those with nuclear capabilities, must join international efforts to ban nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in our region.

(Mr. Gdaia, Saudi Arabia)

Over the past decade and at the outset of this one, the Gulf, that vital region of the world, was ravaged by two wars. The first, the Iraq-Iran war, had consequences and caused damage that were felt beyond the borders of the two warring countries. The consequences of that war shook the very foundations on which the security and stability of the region were built. The second was the war brought on the region by the Iraqi regime through its occupation of the State of Kuwait and its threats against the security, territorial integrity and sovereignty of the States in the region.

In this context, my delegation wishes to reaffirm that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia made every effort to spare the region those wars. It is no secret that my Government has a clear-cut policy in this respect, which reflects our strong belief in the need to spare the region any regional or international conflict. It is known both in the region and elsewhere that we have never been the source of aggression or threat of aggression against any other State. We reject the principle of the use of force in international relations.

The lesson of the Kuwait crisis is that the real threat to the security of the Gulf was regional and not international. In this context, all international instruments and all principles of international law must be respected: respect for the sovereignty and independence of every State not only spares the region the bane of tension, but also promotes confidence and fosters good-neighbourliness and good intentions. Sincerity in international relations increases the prospects of commercial, economic and political cooperation, after which the peoples of the region aspire in their search for the stability that would make possible the adoption of policies capable of safeguarding their interests and ensuring their safety and security.

(Mr. Gdaia, Saudi Arabia)

On that basis, and pursuant to our desire to promote security and stability in the region, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the other States members of the Gulf Cooperation Council have entered into arrangements with the Arab Republic of Egypt and the Syrian Arab Republic. These arrangements have taken shape in the form of the Damascus declaration as a general framework for promoting relations and coordination between these States, on all levels, in accordance with the principles of the League of Arab States and of the United Nations.

Furthermore, the development of positive relations between the States of the Gulf Cooperation Council and the Islamic Republic of Iran, as well as the efforts being made to improve those relations, will lead in the future to a new stage, a veritable quantum leap in the nature of relations between the States of the Gulf region. The fruits of cooperation and brotherliness will surely benefit the stability, security of the region and the well-being of its peoples.

As we stand at the threshold of a new era wherein the reduction of weapons assumes a high priority in relations between States, we hope that international economic issues will benefit from those tendencies. We hope that those tendencies will be reflected in an increased international contribution to development through the channelling to development of some of the enormous sums that used to be spent on armaments under the conditions of the cold war.

The concern of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with economic problems and the question of development stems from the fact that we ourselves are a developing country. Our own experience makes us well aware of the suffering of the majority of States in the world in attempting to realize the aspirations of

(Mr. Gdaia, Saudi Arabia)

their peoples for a better future. Therefore, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has tried always to use its resources to alleviate the developmental problems of friendly developing States, and has always made such assistance unconditional, in order to help those friendly nations to pursue their development efforts.

The security of nations will not be achieved through war and destruction. International solidarity, which is a must in our time, has to stem from good intentions. Solidarity cannot be achieved when States have hidden intentions which are more important to them than their declared policies. Security is the fruit of confidence, confidence stems from solidarity and solidarity is born of credibility; without these essential components, international peace and security cannot be ensured.

All of us as States bear the responsibility of ensuring our future by avoiding the mistakes and pitfalls of the past. We must combine our efforts in order to guarantee a future of peace, security, understanding and mutual trust. Such a future will be achieved only through adherence to international instruments and to the principles and objectives of this international Organization. It is in that way that we can achieve security and consolidate peace.

Mr. KONIK (Poland): As the Polish delegation indicated in its previous intervention earlier this week, we should now like to comment briefly on some of the problems addressed in this year's report of the Conference on Disarmament (A/46/27). The report is as voluminous as in the past, covering the results of the work of the Conference on Disarmament during 1991.

A close reading reveals that the negotiating process in Geneva has not been unaffected by the profound changes taking place on the international

(Mr. Konik, Poland)

scene. This is particularly true with regard to the negotiations on chemical weapons. The considerable progress achieved in the course of 1991 in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons is reflected in its "Preliminary structure of a convention on chemical weapons" (A/46/27, pp. 61 ff.). My delegation welcomes this tangible indication of the advanced state of the work of the Conference on Disarmament.

A new, fresh impetus has been given to the chemical weapons negotiations by President Bush's initiative, in particular by the United States commitment to destroy, unconditionally, all its stocks of chemical weapons within 10 years of the entry into force of the convention and to forswear the use of chemical weapons against any State for any reason, including retaliation.

My Government wholeheartedly welcomes this initiative. The momentum thus added to the negotiating process must not be lost; we believe that all possible efforts must be made to implement the standing mandate, as amended, of the Conference on Disarmament for the chemical weapons negotiations, in order to achieve, in the course of 1992, a final agreement on the complete and effective prohibition of the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons and on their destruction.

According to the report under consideration, important steps in this direction have already been made this year. I have in mind, first and foremost, the inclusion in the scope of the future convention of a provision on the total prohibition of the use of chemical weapons, the withdrawal of the 2 per cent security stockpile concept and the acceptance of a 10-year deadline for the destruction of chemical weapons and production facilities.

The structure of the draft convention has been completed by the inclusion of articles X and XI.

(Mr. Konik, Poland)

Their provisions concern, respectively, assistance in case of use or threat of use of chemical weapons, economic and technological development, measures to redress a situation and to ensure compliance, including sanctions, amendment procedure and the settlement of disputes. Besides, the progress on legal and institutional matters, including the highly complex issue of jurisdiction and control, clears the way to solving other problems in this area as well.

A major issue still unresolved concerns verification. Undoubtedly, the key to an effective verification system is an agreement on challenge inspections. We consider such an inspection concept to represent a new generation of verification measures. The concepts of openness and transparency in military matters have also gained in recent years an increasingly important place in disarmament efforts. Given the improved international atmosphere, especially the fact that the old rivalries and confrontation have yielded to cooperation, it should now be much easier to probe the ground for an intrusive verification than was conceivable just some years ago. It is not only in the interest of effective implementation of the Convention itself but also in the interest of effective verification of future disarmament agreements. The challenge inspection can meet the security concerns of States that in future become parties to the Convention on chemical weapons. We are not closing our eyes to such legitimate questions as how to prevent possible abuses and how to protect sensitive information unrelated to the Convention. In our opinion, the best way to solve these problems is to develop appropriate procedures that everyone could accept. Material accumulated over the many years of negotiation makes this task fully feasible. The time has come now to finalize the challenge inspection

(Mr. Konik, Poland)

provisions and procedures. In the considered view of the Polish delegation, this is the most urgent task if we really mean to finalize the Convention by 1992.

Poland welcomes the progress made in verification procedures for the chemical industry. The extension of verification activities to cover "schedule 3 facilities" as well as the "capable facilities" increases our confidence that the chemical industry is not being used for purposes prohibited under the Convention. At the same time, we must find a proper selection mechanism in order to elaborate a cost-effective and fail-proof system, without compromising the deterrence factor so essential if verification is to be meaningful. Given the possibly great number of facilities to be covered by on-site inspections within the context of article VI, the only way out is to envisage a role for States parties in the selection process. Smooth and effective implementation of the Convention would help to alleviate current concerns over possible conflict-prone situations arising from the role of States parties in identification of facilities to be inspected. Apart from the aforementioned verification provisions, there are other issues which are yet to be settled, such as the composition, functions and decision-making powers of the executive council and the financing of the future organization. These are important issues whose resolution in a manner acceptable to all parties concerned will be easier once the verification regime is agreed upon.

The delegation of Poland is confident that, with the real political will to search actively for reasonable compromise solutions, the First Committee will be able at the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly to recommend

(Mr. Konik, Poland)

a draft Convention on the complete and effective prohibition of the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons and on their destruction, for approval and signature by Members of the United Nations. This would be a crowning moment in a process started many years ago to get rid of chemical weapons. This year, in keeping with a long tradition, Canada and Poland will propose to the First Committee a draft resolution urging the Conference on Disarmament to exert itself so that the foregoing scenario can be carried through in 1992.

In order to be truly effective, the Convention on chemical weapons must be universally adhered to. The responsibility for achieving this goal rests not only with States participating in the negotiating process. That is why my delegation welcomes the declarations of intent of many States to become original signatories to the Convention. As is known, Poland has already made such a declaration. We would appeal to other States to make similar declarations.

We likewise welcome the statements concerning withdrawal of reservations to the 1925 Geneva Protocol and we urge States which have not yet done so to withdraw such reservations at the latest by the date of entry into force of the Convention.

I have dwelt at some length on the question of a ban on chemical weapons. This does not mean, of course, that my delegation does not appreciate the significance of other items on the agenda of the Conference. Nuclear issues, particularly efforts aimed at nuclear disarmament, are indeed of vital importance. As the Polish delegation observed in its first statement, the implementation of the Treaty on the Elimination of

(Mr. Konik, Poland)

Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles, the signature of the Treaty on strategic arms reductions and the recent initiative on nuclear arms by President Bush, reciprocated by the USSR, are signs of profound change in this field. We welcome this process and we are confident that it will substantially improve the climate also for the multilateral approach to nuclear disarmament issues. The Conference on Disarmament this year devoted substantial attention to different aspects of nuclear disarmament. It succeeded in its effort aimed at an early re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban. The report under consideration signifies that the Conference is a useful forum for a dialogue to identify the best and most promising ways of dealing with that question. We appreciate in particular the valuable work performed by the Ad Hoc Group of Scientific Experts to Consider International Cooperative Measures to Detect and Identify Seismic Events, in which Poland has actively participated. In this connection, Poland believes that the unilateral moratorium on underground nuclear tests, announced recently by President Gorbachev, will add momentum to the future work of the Ad Hoc Committee. It would be desirable if the Soviet moratorium evoked a positive response on the part of other nuclear Powers as well.

The Polish delegation welcomes also the useful exchange of views at informal meetings at the Conference on Disarmament on the question of cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament and on prevention of nuclear war. We consider that such a debate is invaluable, given the gradual evolution of perceptions of the role of nuclear weapons in preserving world stability and security.

(Mr. Konik, Poland)

We are pleased that the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space started its work earlier than in the past and that it held worthwhile and substantive discussions. In particular, my delegation would like to place on record our appreciation of the work done on the terminological aspects related to prevention of an arms race in outer space, on anti-satellite verification and on confidence-building measures related to space activities. Much credit in this respect goes to the Friends of the Chairman. We feel that such an exercise provides an additional and welcome opportunity to seek areas of convergence of views. In our opinion, one of the aspects we should look at, besides confidence-building measures is that of possible cooperative measures in the use of outer space for disarmament verification.

We share the opinion contained in the concluding part of the Committee's report regarding the importance and urgency of preventing an arms race in outer space. Consequently we support its recommendation that the Ad Hoc Committee should be re-established at the beginning of the 1992 session.

Mr. PORTER (United States of America): I have just a few, very brief remarks to make. The United States statement delivered in the Committee on the fifteenth of this month contains a paragraph briefly describing the arms elimination and verification regime stipulated by Security Council resolutions 687 (1991), 707 (1991) and 715 (1991). Included in that paragraph was a sentence, which, owing to an unfortunate misprint in the prepared text, stated that the long-term monitoring programme under that regime is to prevent Iraq from rebuilding its conventional weapons. The reference to "conventional weapons" is, of course, incorrect and should be replaced by the words "weapons of mass destruction and missile capabilities."

The United States delegation requests that this correction be reflected in the pertinent verbatim record of the Committee's proceedings.

The CHAIRMAN: I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. KHERADI (Secretary of the Committee): I wish to inform representatives that a technical error occurred during the printing process in connection with the membership list of the First Committee, as now contained in document A/C.1/46/8. Accordingly, a number of delegations are incorrectly reflected in the document. I have been informed by the Documents Control Unit of the Secretariat that a corrected version of the document will be available on Monday, 28 October.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.

A/C.1/
46/PV.
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UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

Official Records

FIRST COMMITTEE
Eighteenth meeting
held on
Friday, 25 October 1991
at 3 p.m.
New York

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 18th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. ALPMAN (Turkey)
(Vice-Chairman)

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- Statement by the Chairman
- General debate on all disarmament items (continued)

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In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Alpman (Turkey), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

The CHAIRMAN: I should like to inform members that the Chair has been approached by a number of delegations requesting that the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions under the disarmament items be extended. Taking into account such concerns, and in order to enable consultations that are now under way on a number of texts to be successfully concluded, the Bureau of the Committee is of the opinion that the most feasible extension of the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions would be Wednesday, 30 October 1991, at 6 p.m.

It is my sincere hope that this additional time being made available will be instrumental in allowing a wider base of agreement to emerge on those texts.

If the Committee agrees with such a proposal, I shall nevertheless urge delegations kindly to do their utmost to submit as many draft resolutions as possible before the new deadline, so as to facilitate the proceedings of the Committee when we reach the stage of consideration and action on draft resolutions.

As I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Committee agrees with the proposal that I have just made regarding the extension of the deadline until Wednesday, 30 October 1991, at 6 p.m.

It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEMS 47 TO 65 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT ITEMS

Mr. KOEFFLER (Austria) (interpretation from French): I am speaking today to make a few comments on chemical weapons and the negotiations on a convention banning such weapons.

Since on 13 May President Bush announced his initiative on chemical weapons, the Ad Hoc Committee on this question has made significant progress. Nevertheless, several points remain unresolved, and they require not only technical solutions but also a political settlement. I am thinking particularly of the questions of verification and decision-making.

The main problem we have encountered with respect to verification is identifying objective criteria which would enable us to include certain installations in the verification regime. In this connection, we believe that the concept of "capacity" is a fundamental criterion, while agreeing with others that it would be desirable to restrict this concept to the most pertinent types of installations. This should take care of both the political and the technical problems relating to the scope of verification. In political terms, this would help to overcome the misgivings of representatives of the chemical industry as well as of those countries that have a number of chemical installations. Furthermore, the financial implications could thus be kept down to an acceptable level.

With respect to the decision-making machinery to be adopted in light of the future convention, I should like to touch upon three principles I believe are essential, namely, the geographical distribution of seats, transparency and flexibility.

In light of the respective regional and world interests of all States, without exception, all regions of the world should be appropriately represented

(Mr. Koeffler, Austria)

in the decision-making structure. If the functioning of the future Organization is to inspire general confidence, it is essential that the decision-making process be as transparent as possible. This should also be safeguarded in all other spheres of activity of the future organization, while bearing in mind, at the same time, restrictions on information required by commercial confidentiality and the security interests involved.

(Mr. Koeffler, Austria)

Flexibility is necessary to allow a prompt political and administrative reaction. Because of the way the international scene is developing and because of the considerable progress in science and technology, the implementation and interpretation of the convention should be flexible. My country attaches the greatest possible importance to achieving a complete ban on chemical weapons. For that reason Austria has become involved in the process of negotiation and maintains its offer to host the future control organization.

The organization will have to perform a number of different functions to ensure the comprehensive application of the convention. One of these functions is verification in the broadest sense of the word, including the periodic updating of ways and means of verification.

As we see it, the organization should provide the international community with a wide range of services and be easily accessible. Its location should afford it the closest cooperation and coordination with the other international bodies concerned, the international community and the scientists engaged in matters of verification.

Now that the end of the negotiations on chemical weapons seems to be in sight, clearly the time is now ripe to deal with the question of reservations to the Geneva Protocol of 1925. States parties may declare that they are prepared to withdraw all their reservations to the Protocol as soon as possible or, at all events, before the convention comes into force.

The conclusion of a convention on chemical weapons will strengthen the security of any State becoming a party to that instrument. That is a praiseworthy and important goal which we should not lose sight of.

Mr. KRISHNAN (Malaysia): Allow me first of all to congratulate Mr. Robert Mroziewicz of Poland on his appointment as Chairman of the Committee. I am confident that under his wise and able guidance, the work of the Committee will bear fruitful results. Allow me also to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election as Vice-Chairmen and Rapporteur of the Committee.

The end of the cold war and other positive developments around the world have given hope of the emergence of a better international environment. Although the exact nature of the much-talked-about new order is still not clear, most countries seem to regard it as an opportunity to move towards a positive future for all of us. Malaysia shares this view. However, we still need to be cautious as there are many challenges ahead and many long-standing issues remain unresolved. Therefore, we must examine our priorities and strategies in terms of global peace and security and ask ourselves what sort of world we want our children and our children's children to live in. There is a window of opportunity in front of us: we can turn the uncertainty of our past into a future of progress, stability and security for the next generation. In this regard disarmament is one area which deserves priority consideration by the international community.

Since its inception, the United Nations has recognized that disarmament is the key to world peace and security. It has made the ending of the arms race a primary task until what is popularly known as general and complete disarmament is achieved. Yet we are still far from achieving such a goal. The reason for our failure has been the cold war which ensured that no region in this world felt secure enough to allow such a noble ideal to bloom. The ending of the cold war has opened the way for a new beginning towards making substantive progress in arms control and disarmament.

(Mr. Krishnan, Malaysia)

In our view, the attainment of future global peace and security must start with the elimination of weapons of mass destruction. Since the end of the Second World War, we have been subjected to the constant fear of a nuclear holocaust. Indeed, at least once we came very close to a nuclear confrontation between the two super-Powers. We have been told repeatedly that in the tense atmosphere of the cold war, nuclear weapons were an essential deterrent that would preserve our freedom and our way of life. There have been many efforts - multilateral and bilateral - to reduce and to eliminate these weapons of doom but progress has been limited. The rise of a new leadership in the Soviet Union in the mid 1980s has brought a new era of East-West cooperation. It has resulted in the first substantive progress in nuclear disarmament when the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles (INF Treaty) was signed. The INF Treaty is the first in history to eliminate an entire category of nuclear weapons. It was followed recently by the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), a significant and encouraging agreement. But much more needs to be done as the number of nuclear warheads left under the START Treaty is more than when the START process began.

Malaysia therefore welcomes the recent initiative by President George Bush to eliminate all short-range nuclear warheads, to withdraw cruise missiles from ships, submarines and land-based naval aircraft, to terminate the intercontinental ballistic missile programme and to cancel the new short-range-attack missile programme. Malaysia was equally happy when President Mikhail Gorbachev of the Soviet Union responded positively to the proposals. In fact, the other nuclear-weapon States should become parties to

(Mr. Krishnan, Malaysia)

this latest initiative which we consider to be a good beginning for the gradual elimination of all types of nuclear weapons, including strategic weapons.

Some people may frown when we talk about the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Over the years, controllers of these weapons have adamantly defended their position when stating why they cannot or must not be eliminated. It has always been argued that nuclear weapons are like a genie that can never be put back in the bottle. Yet, strangely enough, we never hear the same argument about chemical weapons - another weapon of mass destruction that is relatively easy to make and conceal. The Conference on Disarmament is at present working on a convention that would effectively ban the production, stockpiling and transfer of chemical weapons. By the latest estimate the chemical weapons convention should be ready for signing in 1992. Why is it not possible to have the same type of convention on nuclear weapons?

(Mr. Krishnan, Malaysia)

Malaysia strongly believes that a convention on nuclear weapons is not only possible but a matter of necessity. In today's age of monumental electronic advances and diminishing international tension, the argument that such a convention would be difficult to verify no longer holds water. The fact is that it can be verified, and experience gained by the United States and the USSR during the negotiations on the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) and the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe have proved the convention's viability. The ability of the United States to detect clandestine nuclear-weapons programmes in the Middle East is another example of the feasibility of the convention. On the question of monitoring, the instrument for regulating and implementing it already exists, even though it needs to be transformed and strengthened. I am referring to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

To ensure a nuclear-weapon-free era, the NPT should be transformed into a convention banning all nuclear weapons. At the present time, the NPT, despite its strong points, particularly in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, has always been perceived as a flawed agreement, for two main reasons. The first is its discriminatory nature, and the second is its failure to achieve universality. Malaysia welcomed the indications of France and China - the two remaining nuclear-weapon States not parties to the NPT - that they intend to become signatories to the NPT. However, the fact remains that the NPT in its present form is discriminatory. This weakness has prevented many of the so-called threshold countries from adhering to the NPT. Therefore we believe that the only way for the NPT to achieve universality is to eliminate totally all types of nuclear weapons and transform the NPT into a convention banning the production, stockpiling and transfer of nuclear weapons. Such an

(Mr. Krishnan, Malaysia)

endeavour must take place under the United Nations umbrella, and it must begin now, in anticipation of the NPT extension conference to be convened in 1995.

Pending the complete ban on nuclear weapons, Malaysia also calls for a total ban on nuclear tests for the development of even more destructive weapons. We believe that these tests are conducted for the sole purpose of achieving more sophisticated weapons and nothing else. Increased sophistication will only mean more destruction for less yield. Thus, the vertical proliferation of these weapons will be perpetuated and will inevitably lead to a further nuclear-arms race. As echoed by Indonesia, we are also concerned that the advances made in nuclear-weapons technology will result in difficulty in verifying a future convention on them. This does not augur well for our future and must come to an end.

Today, the world community is becoming more and more aware and concerned about the destructive consequences of human activities on the face of the Earth and the need to preserve our environment. Against this background, nuclear-weapon tests are at odds with the policies of some countries which profess environmental concerns. We have been told that underground nuclear tests - the only type that is allowed now - do not adversely affect the environment. However, the fact is that radioactive contamination does occur during these tests and there is no guarantee that this will not affect people living close to the test sites. If it is so safe, why can such tests not be conducted in Europe or in the Mediterranean Sea and not in the Pacific?

In step with the transformation of the NPT, a mechanism must also be established to ban the delivery systems for these weapons, such as certain categories of submarines, strategic bomber missile systems, and, above all, the intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) system. The elimination of these delivery systems is an essential foundation for confidence-building

(Mr. Krishnan, Malaysia)

The chemical-weapons convention is expected to be ready for signature in 1992. Malaysia welcomes this development and wishes to congratulate the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons of the Conference on Disarmament for its exemplary efforts, which have brought the negotiations to their present stage. Malaysia would also like to thank Australia for trying to involve other non-member States of the Conference by organizing regional consultations on the matter to enable them to have their views made known to the Conference.

Malaysia believes that the present stage of negotiations would not have been possible without the agreement of the two super-Powers to the gradual elimination of their nuclear-weapons arsenals. We wish to note that the announcement by President Bush of the United States decision to waive its earlier intention to maintain 10 per cent of its chemical weapons stock is the most important gesture in making the convention possible.

Malaysia is ready to adhere to the convention, provided that it does not hamper the growth of legitimate chemical industries in developing countries. Emphasis should also be given to the process for the destruction of these weapons. Countries that are unable to dispose of their own weapons safely - or dispose of those weapons left on their territory by others - must be given assistance in order to avoid adverse effects on the environment.

Malaysia managed to participate for the first time in the Third Review Conference of the biological weapons Convention held recently in Geneva. We are happy with the outcome of the Conference. It has strengthened our belief that the international community is able to cooperate to establish effective arms-control regimes. The signing of the Convention was too simplistic and we are happy to note that as an outcome of the Third Review Conference, the Convention will now be strengthened with verification procedures and other

(Mr. Krishnan, Malaysia)

steps that will curb violations, increase transparency and therefore promote confidence among States.

Global peace and stability cannot be achieved by the eradication of weapons of mass destruction alone. We must realize that conventional weapons have wreaked more havoc, killed more people and brought more misery to mankind - especially in the third world - than any other type of weapon. Since the end of the Second World War, it has been estimated that 40 million people have been killed in wars around the world and all of them were the result of conventional weaponry. On this point, Malaysia is not advocating the elimination of conventional weapons in the true sense of the phrase "complete disarmament". It would be naive to think that a nation could do without appropriate defence in case of sudden or unexpected aggression. However, it must be underlined that the excessive accumulation of arms would only invite suspicion and instability. Therefore, Malaysia supports any effort towards confidence-building through transparency in production, stockpiling, transfer of arms and military technology. In this regard, Malaysia and other non-aligned countries are hoping to work with the European Community and Japan on a United Nations armaments reporting system and arrive at a consensus draft resolution for adoption by the General Assembly at its current session.

To feel secure, countries must be confident that there will not be any threat to their security. Our experience has been that, most often, threats came from our own neighbours. These threats could be real, but sometimes they could be inaccurate perceptions. Therefore, a mechanism should be established between neighbours on a regional basis to promote confidence-building and eliminate the possibility of tensions emanating from the purchase, production and stockpiling of armaments. In this respect, Malaysia would like to

(Mr. Krishnan, Malaysia)

congratulate the countries of Europe, the United States and Canada, for their success in negotiating the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe and to laud the viability of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) established to promote confidence-building and cooperation among European countries. Other regions should be encouraged to develop their own mechanisms for confidence-building and arms control. As far as developing countries are concerned, disarmament is an important factor that will contribute towards development.

(Mr. Krishnan, Malaysia)

I cannot stress too strongly the significance of the relationship between disarmament and development. The developed countries have been pontificating on the virtues of the developing countries' reducing arms spending, yet it is the former who are the major producers and sellers of weapons and it is they which sometimes extend foreign military assistance for the purchase of weapons. Now is the time for us to start implementing the action programme we agreed on in the final document of the 1987 International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development and to resort more to dialogue and negotiation to resolve our differences and ensure our security.

To ensure long-term regional security and confidence among neighbours, Malaysia, together with its neighbours in the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), has since 1971 been promoting the regional concept of a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality (ZOPFAN). In addition, ASEAN member countries also signed the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in South-East Asia in 1976, in which member countries agreed to resolve any dispute by peaceful means, prevent outside interference and promote regional cooperation. Indeed, ASEAN is widely recognized as an important factor for peace; and following the signing of the Paris Agreement on Cambodia last Wednesday, Malaysia, along with its friends in ASEAN, will continue to strive to strengthen peace in the region, starting with the accession of the Indochinese countries to the 1976 Treaty of Amity and Cooperation.

The journey towards achieving disarmament started long ago. We are now at a crossroads where we must commit ourselves to a clear and definite path towards general arms control and disarmament. Malaysia, for its part, will strive to play its role in building a more equitable peace and security for all nations and a brighter future for all of us.

Mr. DEYANOV (Bulgaria): The Gulf War and recent progress in disarmament have highlighted the non-proliferation motivation of the arms-control policies of many States. As a result, the non-proliferation issue now seems to rate extremely high in international affairs.

The growing interest in and support for initiatives to curb the global spread of weapons are a natural response to widely shared concerns about the dangers to peace posed by their unrestricted accumulation. The need for coordinated non-proliferation measures on a regional and global level is being widely recognized as an urgent task of the international community. We consider such individual and joint actions by States within the system of the United Nations an indispensable element of the quest for a new world order of peace, stability and security.

What the international community needs at present is a universally shared political determination not only to denounce but also actively to oppose any further proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and missile delivery systems as well as the excessive accumulation of conventional arms. Differing perceptions on how best to achieve the immediate non-proliferation goals should not prevent us from arriving at common understandings on long-term objectives and elaborating widely supported guidelines for a responsible arms-trade policy.

The Gulf crisis has taught us to look at non-proliferation in a wider context. Arms-control objectives in this field can no longer be restricted to nuclear weapons alone. They now cover not only nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, but also missile delivery systems and conventional arms transfers. This, of course, should not be seen as downgrading in any way the well-established place of nuclear non-proliferation on the disarmament agenda.

(Mr. Deyanov, Bulgaria)

We believe that the various ways of strengthening and expanding non-proliferation regimes in the present circumstances should not necessarily be considered as mutually exclusive alternatives. Contractual global mechanisms, regional arrangements, a harmonization of suppliers' policies, stronger national export controls, inspection activities of international institutions and agencies, comprehensive bans and limitations - all these avenues of arms control could be viewed as indispensable components of a joint non-proliferation effort. When one approach does not seem to produce immediate results, another one may well achieve the non-proliferation objectives. We should opt to do what is feasible at any stage and resist being overwhelmed by a sense of frustration that might ensue from limited results on one or another individual track of current non-proliferation activities.

In the nuclear field, my delegation regards the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as the best available international instrument to prevent nuclear proliferation. The year 1991 is indeed a remarkable one for the NPT. We note with satisfaction a growing tendency to strengthen the Treaty's membership and its legal regime. The decisions in principle announced by France and China to accede to the NPT bring us to the point of achieving the difficult goal of having all five nuclear-weapon States together in the mainstream of nuclear non-proliferation efforts. The accession of South Africa, Zambia, Tanzania and Zimbabwe to the NPT is another major event which, we hope, may change old and deeply entrenched concerns in Africa. We also welcome the intention of Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Ukraine to accede to the NPT as non-nuclear-weapon States.

All these developments, which bring us closer to universal adherence to the NPT, should be consolidated by the full implementation of all its

(Mr. Deyanov, Bulgaria)

provisions. An impeccable record in this respect would greatly help the NPT member States to extend the viability of the treaty well beyond 1995. Bulgaria supports the indefinite extension of the Treaty and will work for the achievement of this important goal at the fifth NPT Review Conference.

A future-oriented balance of interests within the NPT should address both horizontal and vertical concerns and also cover developments associated with peaceful uses of nuclear energy. With this in mind we believe that efforts should be accelerated to accomplish significant results in all NPT-related arms-control areas. The latest unilateral steps by the two leading nuclear-weapon States in announcing immediate plans to withdraw their non-strategic nuclear weapons, in addition to the drastic reductions under the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) and the Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missile (INF) Treaty, are particularly encouraging for all who wish to strengthen the foundations of the NPT. An early decision to start the preparatory process for the 1995 Conference would streamline all efforts and offer new hopes that the remaining difficult issues associated with the implementation of the NPT will be solved in time for a more positive Fifth Review Conference.

The successful record of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in safeguarding the peaceful nuclear activities of States and in ensuring compliance with the NPT is a proven cornerstone of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. The Gulf crisis has reinforced our understanding that the Agency's traditional inspection system should be improved and strengthened if it is to meet the new challenges of our time.

Bulgaria took part in and supports the important decisions to this effect by the IAEA General Conference held last month in Vienna. We shall continue to do so as a newly elected member of the Agency's Board of Governors.

(Mr. Devanov, Bulgaria)

The results of the inspections by the United Nations Special Commission and IAEA, detecting Iraq's non-compliance with its safeguard obligations, have been reported to the Security Council and will serve as a timely warning about the grave political and other consequences that potential violators of non-proliferation commitments will have to face in the future. This is a central point not only with respect to nuclear-related matters but also with respect to the equally important chemical, biological and missile technology areas.

Pursuant to United Nations Security Council resolutions 687 (1991) and 700 (1991), the Government of Bulgaria has adopted a special decree and enforced national export control procedures to prevent deliveries of arms, military equipment, materials and technologies that may be used for purposes contrary to the provisions of paragraphs 24, 25 and 27 of the first of these two resolutions.

I wish to associate my country with the call to all non-nuclear-weapon States to submit all their nuclear activities to IAEA safeguards. We note with satisfaction the decision of Brazil and Argentina to conclude full-scope safeguard agreements with IAEA. My delegation also welcomes with appreciation the regional arrangements of those two States to comply with the Tlatelolco Treaty and to implement a recently signed bilateral agreement on the use of nuclear energy exclusively for peaceful purposes. We are happy to note further that a full-scope safeguard agreement with IAEA has also been concluded recently by South Africa, in line with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Against these positive developments, my delegation cannot but express its concern over the fact that there are parties to the non-proliferation Treaty,

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particularly those in sensitive areas of international tension or conflict, which have not yet signed similar safeguard agreements with IAEA as required by their respective obligations under that Treaty. We hope that the recently announced steps in the field of nuclear disarmament will help bring to an early and successful finalization the process of the concluding of a safeguard agreement by IAEA with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

It is my privilege to inform this Committee that the Government of Bulgaria has adopted and strictly applies in its national export control policy the guidelines agreed upon by the Nuclear Suppliers Group. My country is also taking part in the current international efforts to update the list of nuclear-related dual-use equipment, material and technology, which will provide the basis for the envisaged legal and administrative procedures of strengthened export control in Bulgaria. This enhanced national regime is meant to be of a comprehensive character and to cover commodity items associated with the manufacturing and proliferation of all types of weapons of mass destruction and missile delivery systems.

It is our firm conviction that the most effective way to achieve the non-proliferation objectives in the chemical field is by a global and effectively verifiable ban on chemical weapons, which is expected to be finalized next year. Bulgaria has welcomed the recent advancement of the negotiations on chemical weapons in Geneva as a result of important and timely initiatives by the United States Government and has reiterated its intention to become an original party to the Convention. In the Conference on Disarmament the Bulgarian delegation has expressed its belief that the inclusion in the convention on chemical weapons of a consensus provision on

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forswearing trade in chemical-weapon-related materials with States not parties to the convention would encourage more States to adhere to it and therefore contribute to its achieving universality.

We are convinced that in the meantime individual and group actions to strengthen the respective export controls could contribute to the non-proliferation of chemical weapons. Bulgaria is associated with the efforts of the countries of the Australian Club to apply such standards in their export policies with respect to chemical-weapon precursors and related equipment. It is our intention to keep the national export regime in Bulgaria constantly in line with the latest improvements in the chemical-weapon-related export control guidelines and lists of commodities.

My country also welcomes and will work to implement the decisions of the Third Review Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Weapons, which has adopted measures to build confidence and improve the efficiency of implementation of the Convention on biological weapons, thus reducing the risks of proliferation of such weapons.

Directly related to the non-proliferation objectives at present are the efforts to preclude the further spread of missiles capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction. The missile technology control regime seems for the time being to be the only internationally agreed regime dealing with this new dimension of weapon proliferation. The delegation of Bulgaria notes with satisfaction a growing acceptance by States of the missile technology control regime provisions. My country supports the joint appeal made at the last meeting of the Missile Technology Control Regime Club in Japan to all countries to adopt the guidelines of that regime in drafting their respective

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export policies and domestic controls. We observe that a general understanding is evolving on the role that a missile control regime should play as an important prerequisite for improved scientific and trade exchanges and for ensuring equitable access by States to most advanced technologies.

The United Nations and other international forums should have their own share in the ongoing process of elaborating and implementing the newly emerging system of high-technology weapon-related global control mechanisms. Interesting proposals to this effect already submitted to the United Nations Disarmament Commission merit careful consideration by that body at its spring session next year. The objective should be to establish a new climate of global restraint compatible with the increased need of economic development in a world of dramatic changes and instability. Early progress in accomplishing this important objective would help avoid the emergence of North-South tension and promote confidence and cooperation in technical exchanges on bilateral and multilateral bases. A principal direction for such efforts for many countries, including Bulgaria, will be to ensure themselves unimpeded access to the benefits of science and modern technology, under strict internationally agreed provisions for non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and missile delivery systems.

The delegation of Bulgaria welcomes the interest expressed by many delegations at the current session of the General Assembly in dealing in more specific terms with the issue of proliferation of conventional weapons. In his 1991 report on United Nations activities the Secretary-General expressed his

> "grave concern over the problem of excessive and destabilizing transfers of conventional armaments". (A/46/1, p. 12)

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The Gulf war has highlighted the importance of this issue for security and stability as well as the need for decisive actions by the international community. It has also added much to the feeling of urgency and the determination, voiced by many States, particularly those having a major share in the arms trade, to exercise self-restraint in their arms transfer policies and to act together in order to ensure that such transfers would not create greater instability in areas of tension or conflict anywhere in the world.

My delegation emphasizes this point, as it is relevant not only to the current process of laying new and stable foundations for peace in the Middle East. Concerted international actions to restrict indiscriminate arms transfers may be instrumental also in securing stability in other areas of the world where countries experience serious ethnic tensions or are even involved in armed conflicts. The perceived danger of a possible expansion of such hostilities to neighbouring States gives rise to understandable apprehensions in the whole region. The prospect of aggravating subregional sources of tension, including those resulting from military imbalances, by additional arms transfers, particularly of modern weapons, could continue to breed distrust and cause justified concerns.

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In parallel with actions to prevent or settle regional disputes, harmonization of efforts by all supplying and recipient States to pursue a responsible arms transfers policy would be instrumental in reducing the harmful effects of the arms trade. Basic guidelines for a relevant code of conduct should be elaborated within the United Nations.

In this context, we note that the five States permanent members of the Security Council, at their meeting in London earlier this month, agreed on common rules of restraint in considering, under their national control procedures, possible transfers of conventional arms to other States. The two complementary sets of criteria to be applied by the five States Members in such cases, as stipulated in their joint declaration of 18 October 1991, deserve careful study in view of the complex nature of the issues involved. That declaration speaks of arrangements to exchange information and of consultation, bearing in mind the shared concern of the five to ensure the proper application of the agreed guidelines and to continue discussions on how best to develop these arrangements on a global and regional basis.

The delegation of Bulgaria welcomes also the submission to this Committee of the United Nations study on ways and means of promoting transparency in international transfers of conventional arms. We find that the conclusions and recommendations in the report of the expert group proposed for consideration by this Committee provide a sound basis for determining some of the most urgent follow-up actions in this field.

Countries confronted with a situation where neighbouring States are building up disproportionately large arsenals of weapons can only benefit from international arrangements to curb such excessive stockpiles as may create or further aggravate regional or subregional imbalances of forces. This may

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prove particularly important to small States which neither produce enough weapons to meet their security needs nor are in a position to afford any significant arms imports.

My delegation takes the point made in the United Nations study that such excessive arms build-ups may be fuelled by misperceptions or miscalculations, resulting partly from lack of information about arms acquisitions. In this context, a widely shared belief seems to be emerging that international security and stability would well be served by increased openness and transparency in the area of arms transfers and that such openness would encourage restraint. Bilateral, regional and subregional measures promoting a higher degree of transparency, while not being in themselves limitations or restrictions and depending on the prevailing circumstances, have great potential in building confidence among States.

An indispensable first step in setting up a working international mechanism for monitoring the arms trade is the establishment, under United Nations auspices, of a universal and non-discriminatory register of transfers of conventional weapons. Proposals to this effect have already been put forward for consideration and appropriate action by this Committee.

The concept of a register does indeed have considerable potential for promoting increased openness and transparency, thus contributing to confidence-building on a global and regional level. We believe that the gathering of information should be done on a regular basis with the explicit purpose of using it as a timely warning to the international community about cases of accumulation of weapons arsenals that go beyond a reasonable level of sufficiency determined strictly by the needs of self-defence recognized in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. Providing an acceptable balance of interests in elaborating the procedures and requirements for the

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functioning of the United Nations register would encourage a wider range of States to participate in it.

The delegation of Bulgaria welcomes the forthcoming submission to the First Committee of a draft resolution on the establishment of such a register, as announced in the statements made on behalf of the European Community and its members and by Japan. We intend to join in sponsoring the draft, which we hope will meet widely expressed concerns related to international arms transfers. To this end, my delegation supports the ongoing consultations on the subject.

The Government of Bulgaria would be ready to consider the final result of the drafting exercise in this Committee and participate in the United Nations arms transfers register by providing the annual information agreed upon by as many Member States as possible. It is our hope that this will also be the approach followed by other States.

We believe that the early establishment of the suggested arms transfers register should not be an end in itself. Other elements of the envisaged international transfers regime and its mechanisms would probably be needed to provide for enhanced national export controls, rules governing prudent arms-transfer restraints by both supplier and recipient States, procedures for seeking clarification on a bilateral or multilateral basis, consultations on complaints and international consideration of such issues, and so forth. In this last respect, we feel that the idea put forward by the delegation of Canada to specify a forum wherein Member States could annually review the operation of the United Nations register and consult one another about the information provided to it merits careful consideration.

We assume that the multilateral elaboration of common guidelines on arms transfers in a wider United Nations context would not be an easy task,

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considering the delicate dividing line between "arms transfers for legitimate self-defence" and "transfers which may have destabilizing effects". This line could hardly be drawn without due regard to the specific characteristics of the region concerned, the factors of regional instability or tension, the existence of regional or subregional force imbalances, the indigenous capabilities of recipient States for manufacturing offensive weapons, and so on. For the register to fulfil its desired "early-warning" or "preventive" functions, the international community may need additional information besides that contained in an arms transfers data bank.

Dealing with such complementary arrangements in terms of concrete actions by the United Nations may be a difficult but important task for a next stage. The significance of the elements left out at the first round of consideration of this complex issue should, however, be duly recognized and they should be further studied in order to determine the best way of dealing with them in future, more comprehensive, arrangements. A growing feeling can be detected in this Committee that the crucial point now is to use the present momentum in arms control to help put the United Nations register immediately into effect, and try later to improve the efficiency of its functioning in the light of the consideration of the issue as a whole.

We trust that the register's mechanism for cooperation and further exchange of information on the accumulation of conventional weapons will not be discriminatory to States relying on arms imports for the needs of their own defence. It should function in a manner that will not curb arms transfers aimed at meeting legitimate security objectives, particularly in the case of smaller States. To that end, appropriate arrangements must be made in a regional as well as in a global framework.

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On a national level, Bulgaria has already introduced a set of interim domestic regulations on manufacturing and exports activities in the field of conventional arms and related military equipment. A special governmental commission has been set up to monitor and enforce this regime. Strict control is exercised to prevent unauthorized arms transfers. In full compliance with respective Security Council resolutions, Bulgaria has also taken the administrative steps necessary to enforce the international embargo on arms transfers to Iraq and Yugoslavia. These and other interim measures are envisaged as becoming part and parcel of the future comprehensive national export control legislation now under preparation in Bulgaria.

Mr. AL-BATTASHI (Oman) (interpretation from Arabic): Allow me at the outset to convey to you, Sir, my delegation's warmest congratulations on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. We are confident that your diplomatic skill and wide experience will be instrumental in the successful conclusion of the work of the Committee. We also wish to congratulate the officers of the Committee on their election and we wish them success in their work.

Today, our world is undergoing many important developments as a result of international détente which has been brought about by the end of the Cold War, the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the receding confrontation between the two super-Powers. All this augurs well for the emergence of a free, democratic and coooperative world in the interest of all mankind. This is the model to which all peace-loving forces aspire.

The challenges which face the world in the area of armaments are enormous and difficult due to the existence of arsenals of many types of weapons of mass destruction. Nuclear weapons have become a frightening nightmare because of their overkill capability. Hence the demand to eliminate them has become a matter of the utmost urgency. The same applies equally to chemical weapons due to their extremely destructive nature. Therefore, we agree with and support all efforts aimed at the total, decisive and speedy elimination of such weapons, without hesitation.

The Sultanate of Oman welcomes President Bush's initiative of 27 September 1991 to reduce the United States military arsenal. Similarly, President Gorbachev's positive response was a cause for gratification.

My country fully recognizes the technical difficulties and challenges that impede the speedy elimination of those weapons. The factor of confidence-building as well as that of transparency constitute the cornerstone

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of understanding between the major Powers. More momentum and interest should be given to this issue so that those States may continue their disarmament programme in the desired manner.

The Sultanate of Oman maintains that the question of the elimination of weapons of mass destruction is not only the responsibility of the two super-Powers. Rather, it is the common responsibility of all States which possess such weapons. In this respect, we call for the formulation of a binding legal and universal text that should go hand in hand with the developments that threaten today's world. We urge every country to cooperate in achieving that goal.

The question of nuclear testing is an important one. It should figure prominently and should be dealt with objectively. It is useless to declare drastic and major reductions in the field of armaments while at the same time continuing to conduct tests and to develop more advanced and lethal types of weapons.

We therefore call on all the States concerned to exert more effort in the field of confidence-building in the area of testing and to find practical solutions that eliminate all points of disagreement. The Soviet Union's proposed one-year moratorium on testing should be the first step and the example to be followed. This, in turn, should be followed by a time-frame as a sign of goodwill which in turn should be followed by a comprehensive and general instrument for a total test ban.

My country commends the accession by Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). We see in that a great triumph for the international will to turn our world into a world free

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of the weapons of mass destruction. We also welcome the declaration by China and France - two Powers which carry such weight and importance in the field of armaments - of their intention to accede to the NPT. We commend them for this initiative that has come at a time when we urgently need the concerted efforts of all the parties concerned in this respect.

The concept of collective security has become an international theory that interests all States, especially the weaker, smaller ones that do not possess any effective defence systems at the national level. We see great value in this doctrine since it involves cooperation and exchange of data in addition to the creation of a certain unshakeable stability. It also involves the lessons of deterrence. Moreover, it helps to preserve stability and peace at the universal level, in general, and at the regional level, in particular.

We recently witnessed an example of that reflected in the existence of two major alliances in Europe which during a certain period helped in the maintenace of security of the European continent.

The initiative to create a register for arms transfer is a good one, in principle. However, we emphasize that it is important that this register should include all production, sale and stockpiling under bilateral agreements, as well as transfers on the same footing.

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It should be universal, transparent and non-discriminatory, so that the disired balance may be achieved, and sensitive areas of the world freed from weapons stockpiles. On the other hand, if the idea of this register were confined to certain operations we could not agree to it, as it would lead to many disorders and upheavals, let alone the possibility of threatening the security of certain countries. Moreover, it could compromise the system of regional security in certain sensitive areas where the absence of parity between Powers in nuclear-weapons stockpiles has become a nightmare that portends future dangers which are not all that too far-fetched due to the imbalance of power. We cite the Middle East as a region where such horrors are possible.

As a member of the Committee charged with preparation of the United Nations Conference on the Implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, the Sultanate of Oman commends this effort. Within its modest limits, the Sultanate has participated in the efforts to ensure the success of the Ad Hoc Committee so that the conference may be held at the scheduled time. We wish, however, to express our regret at certain attitudes that surfaced during the Committee's debates. Some States have failed to show the necessary flexibility in their positions, and this resulted in postponement of the Conference. We call upon all those States to show cooperation so that the preparatory work for the Conference may be given momentum.

As a coastal State overlooking the Indian Ocean, my country wishes to see that region become a peaceful and secure oasis, with increased fruitful and constructive cooperation between peoples - an area enjoying security, stability and welfare, instead of a hot-bed of tension and antagonism and a site for the testing of the most advanced military arsenals, capable of

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putting an end to civilization. We hope that these States will respond to the voice of reason and realize that that region, as part and parcel of the security of the whole world, cannot tolerate the dangers with which it is faced.

Proceeding from the urgent desire to increase the happiness of mankind and to rid the world of destructive nuclear weapons, we believe it is important that we prepare for this state of affairs by taking effective measures, such as the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones. On that basis, my country has given its full support to the proposal that the Middle East be turned into a nuclear-weapon-free zone - indeed, a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction - without any conditions. We maintain that we cannot bargain, procrastinate or prevaricate with regard to this issue, as this is a region of the highest strategic importance, and owing to the stupendous stock-piles of nuclear weapons in it the Sultanate of Oman expresses its commendation of the efforts of the United States of America and all the other parties involved in the holding of the international peace conference on the Middle East, which is scheduled to take place in Madrid on 30 October. My country has high hopes that this Conference will result in practical solutions that would have positive historical implications - solutions that pay due regard to the rights of each party and help to build confidence between the various countries of the region with a view to enabling the peoples there to achieve the goal of ridding themselves of lethal weapons and to co-exist peacefully within the framework of non-interference in each other's affairs and of respect for their neighbours.

The final decade of the 1990s is witnessing more effective rapproachement at the world level. Confrontation and antagonism have given way to focusing

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on mutual interests. It is high time for the United Nations, more effectively than ever, to nurture security and cooperation in the world. Its various structures should be strengthened with a view to solving the problems - such as those of the environment and of development - that have burdened the world for so long. In this regard, we call upon all States to abandon the idea that unreasonable levels of armaments are necessary and to see that funds released as a result of arms reductions - and the amounts are astronomical - are directed into development efforts so that peoples may be guaranteed respect under the umbrella of the new world order.

My country wishes to underline the importance of having the United Nations focus on its role in the creation of the new world order. The United Nations is neutral and has credibility, and peoples find there a refuge for the resolution of their disputes by peaceful means, through fruitful dialogue. As an international and universal Organization the United Nations commands respect for its decisions and its resolve.

My country's interest in the environment and its understanding of the importance of environmental protection has led to its supporting the creation of a global environment free of toxins and industrial wastes. We have called for efforts to deal with the dangers of toxic wastes and, in particular, to curb the practices of certain transnational corporations that dump such wastes in the territories of developing countries, especially countries in Africa, the Middle East and the South Pacific. Should such immoral practices continue, they will certainly result in imminent danger to the environment and to all life. In our view, the international community has a duty to grapple very resolutely with this problem. It must take all necessary measures to

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contain the dumping of toxic wastes at all levels. We wish to underline the importance of securing a binding and comprehensive legal agreement that would act as a deterrent to all those who are inclined to dump pollutants that could lead to the extinction of the human race.

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The Sultanate of Oman sincerely appeals to all States possessing technological capability as well as the scientific and economic capabilities not to turn outer space into an arena of conflict in the arms race and not to expose mankind to extinction and annihilation. Any scientific achievements reached by an advanced country should be used in the exploration of outer space in the interests of mankind. Therefore, we wish outer space to be a field of useful scientific experiments and discoveries which would boost and enrich the scientific progress of all mankind.

Among the sensitive issues that disturb international public opinion and are on the agenda of our Committee is the question of nuclear naval armaments. We view very seriously the gravity of that type of armament. We realize that this is a question that is very thorny and fraught with difficulties. Consequently, it should be the focus of greater international attention. In this context, the Sultanate of Oman considers it important to take certain measures to limit the dangers that may arise from various confrontations and naval accidents, especially with regard to ships that carry nuclear weapons. Such accidents would have serious consequences. My country maintains that international efforts in this respect should be complemented with bilateral efforts. Negotiations should be conducted within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament. Certain security measures should be guaranteed for non-military activities at sea. In addition, certain guarantees should be given to the coastal States and neutral ships at sea.

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My country also wishes to pay a tribute to the creative efforts exerted by different parties to guarantee effective security in Europe. We maintain that the security of Europe cannot be achieved without the concerted efforts of all the countries of the continent. We are fully aware that a cohesive and secure European continent will be conducive to the security of the world. Such a cohesiveness, in turn, will contribute to cooperation in all walks of life.

We share the views which call for security guarantees to be given to all States that do not possess nuclear weapons against attacks upon such non-nuclear States by nuclear-weapon States in situations of military conflict. We understand very well the fear of those countries because such attacks could have grave consequences. That fear arises from the fact that countries which possess weapons of mass-destruction have not subjected their nuclear arsenals to the inspection of the International Atomic Energy Agency and have not acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

My delegation welcomes the declaration issued by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) on 17 October on the reduction of the nuclear arsenals of States members of that alliance to levels which we deem reasonable and acceptable. This move indicates an understanding reached by the States of NATO as a result of an attitude of realism and the need to act in concert with the spirit of international détente as well as the lessening of the mutual threat which, in the past, existed between the blocs of the East and the West.

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In conclusion, I wish to say that the Sultanate of Oman maintains that international détente has become an established reality which no one and no party can stop. Consequently, all of us, all peoples and governments, are called upon to spare no effort and to display the necessary dedication to rid mankind of the scourge of weapons of mass destruction. This is a historical opportunity to eliminate those weapons, that may not be repeated. Let us not lose that opportunity because it will not be repeated. Let us close ranks and chart our way, because we live today in a world where cooperation and not antagonism prevails. Our motto should be: The achievement of disarmament for the rest of this decade and for the decades to come. Let us emancipate our peoples from the overwhelming fear of those weapons so that they may enjoy, for the first time, a secure, stable and peaceful world.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.